1: Ray E-5 (1928-38) 1939 Plateau

In the Plains the coup is one of a number of graded war honors of a highly arbitrary and formal sort. Sometimes the term coup is applied to any war honor of the series; in more limited usage it is applied to the act of touching with the hand, or with an object held in the hand, some portion of the body of an enemy.[74] Other commonly recognized war honors include killing, scalping, and stealing a horse.

All of these, and others, are found in the Plateau. The Kutenai and Flathead grade war honors, the Umatilla do not. The same honor may be counted on a single enemy by two warriors in succession; the second is recognized by all tribes to be equal in value to the first. In addition, the Flathead alone admit four such honors in succession, but the second pair is of less value than the first. This practice is associated with an institution of "war brothers;" the individuals paired in counting honors thereby establish this ceremonial friendship.[75] The following honors are recognized by the three Plateau tribes: coup upon living enemy, killing, taking enemy's bow, stealing enemy's horse. Scalping is practiced by the Umatilla and Flathead, not Kutenai. The latter substitutes cutting the enemy's hair. Coup may be counted upon the slain enemy by Kutenai and Flathead, not Umatilla. Untethering an enemy's horse receives honor among Umatilla and Flathead.

Only the Flathead use coup sticks for striking and for recording honors. The Umatilla make marks on blankets or horses. The Kutenai keep records but the method is uncertain.

The Plains practice of limiting honors to either two or four specifically defined acts is not seen in the Plateau. Regarding successive counting by various warriors, two and four as above, are Plains patterns, but neither is found near the Plateau. The adjacent Crow and Blackfoot recognize one only. The Crow set apart certain acts of unusual bravery as ungraded but superior to any on the scale.[76] The Kutenai do likewise, in this case with respect to one act, that of killing the enemy chief unaided.

Within the Plains itself the distribution of war honor details is irregular. This, and adjacent Plateau irregularity, are probably the result of the unusual mobility made possible by the horse, and consequent widespread travel and intercourse.

[74] Smith, *War Complex*, pp. 426–30.
[75] Cf. Turney-High, *Flathead Indians*, p. 65.
[76] Smith, *loc. cit.*